

AMENDMENTS TO THE DRAWINGS

The attached six (6) sheets include FIGS. 1 through 11 and replace the eleven (11) sheets of informal drawings originally filed with the application. In addition, FIG. 8 has been amended to delete reference number 860 and the lead line therefrom.

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the very thorough consideration given to this application. Claims 2-18, 20-22, 24-30, 32-35, 37-43, 45, and 46 are now pending in the application. Claims 47-52 are added.

Claims 33-35 are allowed.

Claims 8-12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 are indicated as being allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has rewritten claims 8, 12, 14, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 into independent form to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, independent claims 8, 12, 14, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 (and all dependent claims depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

For purposes of expediting prosecution and reducing excess claim fees, claims 1, 19, 23, 31, 36, and 44 are cancelled without prejudice to the subject matter contained therein. Applicant expressly reserves the right to refile these cancelled claims and contest any rejections or objections thereof in a subsequent application.

The Examiner is respectfully requested to reconsider and withdraw the objections and rejections in view of the amendments and remarks contained herein.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1-4, 19, 23, 25, 36-38, and 43 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Akman (U.S. Pat. No. 5,119,281). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The cancellation of claims 1, 19, 23, and 36 has rendered moot the rejection thereof.

Applicant has amended claims 2-4 to change their dependency from cancelled claim 1 to amended claim 20 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Claim 20 has been amended to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 20 (and claims 2-4 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 25 has been amended to change its dependency from cancelled claim 23 to amended claim 26 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in

independent form). Applicant has amended claim 26 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 26 (and claim 25 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Applicant has amended claims 37 and 43 to change their dependency from cancelled claim 36 to amended claim 41 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Applicant has amended claim 41 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 41 (and claims 37, 38, and 43 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

REJECTION UNDER 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 13, 16, 28, 44, and 46

Claims 13, 16, 28, 44, and 46 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akman (U.S. Pat. No. 5,119,281) in view of Zingale (U.S. Pat. No. 6,371,638). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The cancellation of claim 44 has rendered moot the rejection thereof.

Applicant has amended claims 13 and 16 to change their dependency from cancelled claim 1 to amended claim 20 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Claim 20 has been amended to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 20 (and claims 13 and 16 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 28 has been amended to change its dependency from cancelled claim 23 to amended claim 26 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Applicant has amended claim 26 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 26 (and claim 28 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Applicant has amended claim 46 to change its dependency from cancelled claim 44 to amended claim 45 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Applicant has amended claim 45 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 45 (and claim 46 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 18, 22, 24, 30, and 31

Claims 18, 22, 24, 30, and 31 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akman (U.S. Pat. No. 5,119,281) in view of Key (U.S. Pat. No. 6,523,778). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The cancellation of claim 31 has rendered moot the rejection thereof.

Applicant has amended claim 18 to change its dependency from cancelled claim 1 to amended claim 20 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Claim 20 has been amended to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 20 (and claim 18 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claim 22 has been amended to change its dependency from cancelled claim 19 to amended claim 21 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Applicant has amended claim 21 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 21 (and claim 22 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 24 and 30 have been amended to change their dependency from cancelled claim 23 to amended claim 26 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Applicant has amended claim 26 to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 26 (and claims 24 and 30 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

Claims 5-7

Claims 5-7 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Akman (U.S. Pat. No. 5,119,281) in view of Stultz (U.S. Pat. No. 2002/0245863). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Applicant has amended claim 5 to change its dependency from cancelled claim 1 to amended claim 20 (which the Office Action indicates would be allowable if rewritten in independent form). Claim 20 has been amended to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, claim 20 (and claims 5-7 depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

NEW CLAIMS

Claims 46-52 are each supported by the application as originally filed. Accordingly, no new matter is introduced by the addition of claims 46-52. Claims 46-52 each depend from a claim that has been rewritten into independent form which the Examiner has indicated would be allowable. Therefore, claims 46-52 are believed to be in condition for allowance for at least this reason.

ALLOWED CLAIMS

Claims 33-35 are allowed.

ALLOWABLE SUBJECT MATTER

The Examiner states that claims 8-12, 14, 15, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 would be allowable if rewritten in independent form. Applicant has rewritten claims 8, 12, 14, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 into independent form to include features of the base claim and intervening claims. Therefore, independent claims 8, 12, 14, 20, 21, 26, 29, 32, 39-42, and 45 (and all dependent claims depending therefrom) should now be in condition for allowance.

CONCLUSION

It is believed that all of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicant therefore respectfully requests that the Examiner reconsider and withdraw all presently outstanding rejections. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance. Thus, prompt and favorable consideration of this amendment is respectfully requested.

Applicant believes that the appropriate fees have been included with this filing. If, however, Applicant owes any additional fee(s), the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge the fee(s) to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**. In addition, if there is ever any other fee deficiency or overpayment under 37 C.F.R. §1.16 or 1.17 in connection with this patent application, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such deficiency or overpayment to Deposit Account No. **08-0750**.

If the Examiner believes that personal communication will expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned directly at (314) 726-7502.

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